

Strategy – DMV Drivers Handbook Revisions; Information on Drowsy and Distracted Driving

General Description

It is estimated that 1.5 – 3.0 million (AAA) crashes occur annually as a result of distracted or drowsy drivers and in 2002, North Carolina experienced over 21,000 distraction/drowsy related crashes with 263 of them being fatal crashes. Distracted and Drowsy driving are serious issues that need to be brought to the attention of North Carolina's motorists.

One of the easier ways to make this information available to North Carolina's drivers is through the Division of Motor Vehicle's *Drivers Handbook*. This is a publication that is provided free of charge to individuals who typically request it prior to being tested or re-tested in order to receive/renew their learner's permit or driver's license. Unfortunately, in the current edition of this book, there are only three brief sentences on driving fatigued and one sentence on distracted driving.

This strategy focuses on making revisions to the present Driver's Handbook to include additional, specific information on distracted and drowsy driving and the associated risk. As a part of this inclusion, test questions should also be added to the pool of potential question about these two issues.

Technical Attributes

Target	All motorists in North Carolina.
Expected Effectiveness	While this strategy is not deemed to be the "cure all" for the issues associated with distracted and drowsy driving, it is one additional step to bring these issues to the attention of the motoring public and increase awareness of the risk as well as the present magnitude of the problem.
Keys to Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate language in the Driver's Handbook about distracted and drowsy driving, the associated risk and the magnitude of the problem.• Test questions on the subject that are included in the general pool of potential questions on the written test to reinforce the principles being conveyed.
Potential Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreement from the Division of Motor Vehicles to make the necessary additions to the next revision of the Driver's Handbook and test questions.• Obtaining agreement on exactly what information should be included in the Handbook, especially with regard to actions drivers can take to avoid distracted and drowsy driving crashes.
Appropriate Measures and Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys conducted before revisions to assess the awareness of young drivers (those who have taken and passed their DMV test within the past 6-12 months) of drowsy and distracted driving and similar tests conducted following the DMV handbook revisions.• A before and after analysis over a long period (2-3 years) of drowsy and distracted driving crashes before the DMV revisions and afterward• The effectiveness of this strategy can only be measured in terms of whether or not it

	is carried out, and some assessment of the quality of material included in the Driver Handbook, possibly based on an analysis of percentage correct responses to the added test questions. It will not be possible to measure any effects on driving behavior or crash involvement associated with this strategy
Associated Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing costs of new DMV manuals, the repositioning of information that might affect pagination of the manual; printing/preparation of new tests to include questions on distracted and drowsy driving • Decisions about what material should be included in the Handbook are made by the DMV. Liability issues may be a concern. For example, the DMV may not want to recommend actions such as consuming caffeinated beverages or even napping if it may cause them to be liable for crashes that may occur when drowsy drivers follow this advice.
Organizational, Institutional, and Policy Issues	Approval from DMV to modify the handbook; concurrent educational information for DOE for their Driver Education curricula, installation of the information in all new driver education courses taught by independent contractors.
Issues Affecting Implementation Time	The necessary additions would not be made until the next time the Driver's Handbook is revised. This may not happen in the immediate future since the handbook was recently revised.
Costs	Cost for this strategy should be minimal.
Training	Training needs exist primarily in providing the updated information to Driver Education teachers so that new drivers become familiarized with distracted and drowsy driving issues.
Legislative Needs	None